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## CHILEAN PRESIDENT SQUARES OFF AT CONGRESS

The Senate vote forcing cancellation of President Frei's proposed trip to the US next week has brought to a head his long-simmering dispute with the opposition-dominated Senate.

Frei's first reaction was to attempt a complex parliamentary maneuver that would have forced a reversal of the vote. Then, apparently recognizing that this could not be accomplished before his scheduled departure date--if at all--he shifted tactics. He now has called for popular repudiation of the Senate, which he claims fails to mirror the changing political situation. He has presented a constitutional amendment that would permit the president to dissolve Congress and call new elections once during his term of office. Although this action was precipitated by the Senate's veto of his trip, it is also a response to other obstructionist actions that have hampered Frei's reform programs since the beginning of his administration.

The constitutional reform must be approved by both houses of Congress. It has the support of Frei's own Christian Democratic Party and of the Communist Party both of which see a

chance to improve their representation. If the Socialists follow the Communist lead, as seems probable, the reform is likely to be adopted over the opposition of the right-wing National Party and of the centrist Radical Party, both of which would almost certainly lose some of their congressional seats in new elections.

The Senate's action has also called into question the extent of the president's power to fulfill his constitutional responsibility for the conduct of foreign affairs. Frei is said to feel that yielding to Senate dictation would impair his ability to promote Latin American integration and would reduce his international reputation. His inability to visit the US may make him unwilling to attend the inter-American summit meeting in April or to engage in other foreign travel during the remainder of his term.

Thus, the stage is set for a confrontation between Frei and the congressional opposition. The US Embassy speculates that if the constitutional reform fails, Frei may try to get direct popular approval of his program in some other manner.

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## ECUADOR-PERU BOUNDARY CONTROVERSY MAY ERUPT AGAIN

The 25th anniversary of the Rio Protocol establishing the boundary between Ecuador and Peru is not likely to pass quietly. Ecuadorean resentment of the protocol could erupt into serious demonstrations in Quito and Guayaquil on 29 January, and there is even the remote possibility of an armed clash with Peru.

Ecuadorean Government officials and the military high command are extremely worried over the possibility of Peruvian incursions along the border on or about 29 January. They are convinced that Peru is concentrating troops near the boundary and that an attempt will be made to place markers along the 70-mile portion that is still unmarked. Ecuador insists that it will meet any Peruvian provocation with force. To counter the alleged Peruvian threat, Ecuador reportedly is increasing its troop strength along the border and recalling former conscripts to duty.

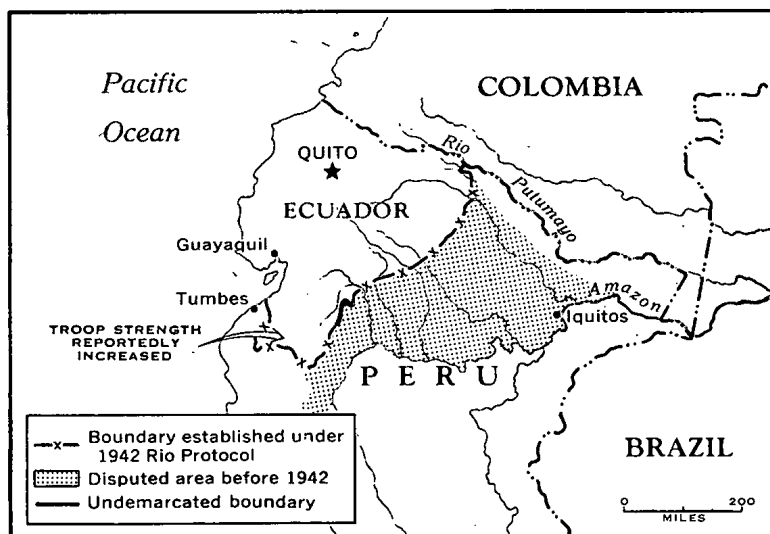
However, Ecuadorean fears of a Peruvian provocation are largely unwarranted.

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Peruvian Government and military reaction to Ecuadorean bombast over the border issue has been restrained and in keeping with President Belaunde's desire to ease tensions. Peruvian leaders have repeatedly stated that if there is an incident, it will occur only as a result of action by Ecuador.

Violent demonstrations may very well occur in Ecuador on 29 January. University students plan protest marches and manifestations. The government is trying to channel demonstrations along peaceful lines, but this may not be possible. Interim President Arosemena is especially eager to keep the issue out of the constituent assembly to prevent opportunistic politicians from inflaming emotions.

The Peruvian Embassy in Quito is a likely target of violence, as are US installations. In previous years, the US Embassy has been stoned because the United States is one of the four guarantor powers of the Rio Protocol.

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